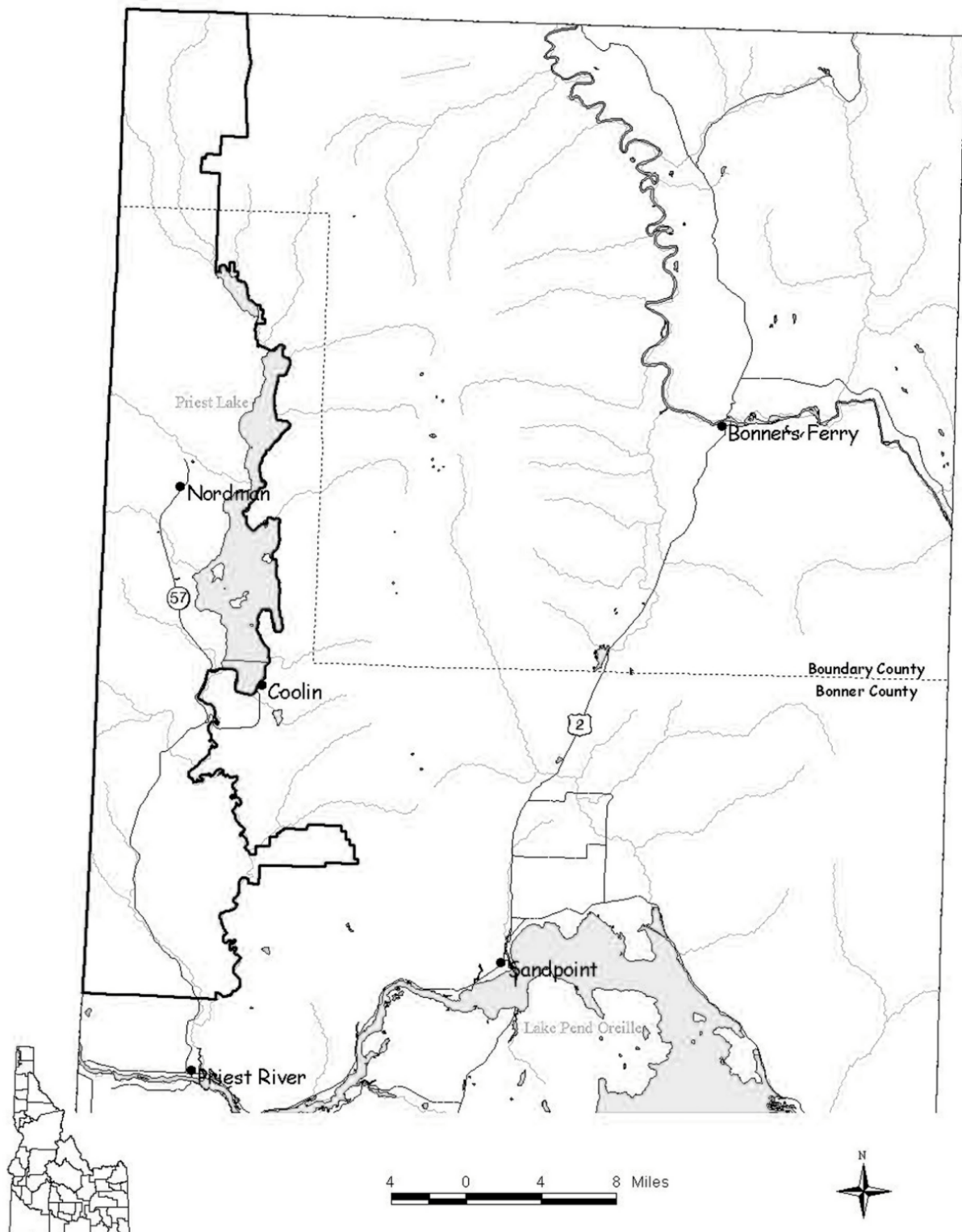

Priest Lake Basin Cooperative

Submitted to:
Idaho Federal Lands Task Force Working Group

Priest Lake Cooperative



6/00

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INTRODUCTION

The management of federal lands has raised many questions on the future of our public forest. The increasing risk from wildfire, insect infestations, and disease threatens the forest attributes of aesthetics, water quality, and recreational values; all attributes the public wants to protect. This pilot project offers an opportunity to evaluate and implement a different method of managing federal lands through a cooperative framework.

Three governmental organizations would be parties to a cooperative agreement for management of the Priest Lake area—the U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. The three agencies would share the responsibility of managing the natural resources of the Priest Lake Basin under appropriate management objectives for recreation, wildlife, and timber harvest and other uses.

Each agency would manage the lands and resources under its respective jurisdiction. Each agency would utilize its own money, staff, facilities, and equipment to do the management tasks on agency lands. Each agency would retain title and management authority over the lands historically managed by the agency. Each agency would follow the laws of its respective sovereign as established or amended by appropriate legislative and executive actions.

Each agency would continue to operate under the traditional institutional framework, i.e., the forest service district would operate under a District Ranger that reports to a Forest Supervisor; the department of lands supervisory area would operate under an Area Supervisor that reports to the Director of the department, and the state park facilities would continue to operate under a Parks Superintendent that reports to the Director of the parks department.

Each agency would operate under its own Board of Trustees or Directors – either already established like the State Board of Land Commissioners for the land department and the State Board of Parks and Recreation for the parks department, or a specially created Board of Directors in the case of the Forest Service -- to facilitate working within the cooperative.

The day-to-day management of the cooperative would lie with the respective land owning agencies. The heart of the cooperative, however, would be the “Local Agency Managers” consisting of at least one representative from each of the three agencies. The Local Agency Managers would be responsible for identifying tasks and actions that might be undertaken jointly or perhaps by one of the three agencies with experience or qualifications that would streamline, simplify, or speed up the action or process. For example, the agencies might work together on prescribed burning to accomplish more burning within tight windows at less cost. Another example might be that state parks would lead the management of public recreational programs in the area because of their experience.

The cooperative would establish a “Public Advisory Committee” to provide advice to the Local Agency Managers and the respective boards of trustees.

Management of the endowment lands as part of this cooperative may pose Constitutional, Admission Act and Trust management concerns from the standpoint of maintaining fiscal

integrity of the funds expended and revenues earned. Operational funds come from specified dedicated fund sources and all revenues earned go to similarly specified dedicated fund accounts for subsequent management activities and the beneficiaries.

The management of endowment lands is the province of the State Board of Land Commissioners, and they may not delegate that oversight to any other party, nor may any of the revenues earned be distributed to any entity other than the specified beneficiary. This project will have to be carefully structured to retain Idaho's constitutional requirements for endowment trust lands.

Priest Lake Basin Cooperative

Area: 265,000 acres; Priest Lake District, Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Of the 265,000 acres in the Priest Lake Ranger District, approximately half the area provides habitat for a threatened population of grizzly bears. This proposal does not include active forest ecosystem management in this portion of the cooperative except to benefit grizzly bears.

Goal: Coordinate management efforts of state and federal agencies to restore and enhance socially determined ecological conditions and improve economic efficiency of resource management for recreation, wildlife, and timber.

Cooperative approaches are not new to natural resource management. In Idaho, there are formal cooperative arrangements that describe areas and responsibilities for fire control between the state and federal agencies. The complexities of implementing the federal Clean Water Act as it applies to forest management are included in a memorandum of understanding among six separate federal and state agencies. The City of Rocks National Reserve is a tract of BLM, Forest Service, and state lands that are actually all part of the National Park Service. The City of Rocks National Reserve is managed cooperatively under a contractual agreement between the State of Idaho and the National Park Service, with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation having the on-the-ground management responsibility.

This proposal identifies the Priest Lake Ranger District as a parcel of federal land that can be managed by using the cooperative method. Some of the benefits that the Cooperative will provide include:

- ✍ Meaningful public involvement for those with an interest in the management of the Priest Lake Basin through a standing "public advisory committee" that will provide equitable representation of all interests,
- ✍ A much greater ability to focus on the wildlife and recreational resources of the lands located on both sides of the lake. Managers working cooperatively will be better able to take actions to protect and/or restore forest ecosystems and sensitive species issues,
- ✍ Additional revenues can be generated to maintain or add to the infrastructure of campgrounds, interpretative sites, trails, snowmobile areas, and other attractions that

are vital to the local businesses of the basin,

- ✍ The ability of the professionals of the land and recreational management agencies to focus on and specialize in the job responsibilities where their skills and expertise contributes to create a “synergistic” effect through their cooperative efforts. For purposes of this discussion, the management of cottage sites on both sides of the lake would be under the management of Department of Lands staff, and, finally,
- ✍ The potential for the public to help shape the processes outlined in this proposal for the management of the basin so that the role of the public as a member and a beneficiary of the cooperative is maximized.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Priest Lake Basin pilot area encompasses the Priest Lake Ranger District in Idaho, which is approximately 265,000 acres located on the west side of Priest Lake. The area is a popular recreation destination for the Spokane, Washington, and Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, residents. The east side of the lake is primarily owned by the State of Idaho and has the same resource values as the national forest lands across the lake. However, the management objectives differ, since the Idaho Constitution clearly mandates that these lands be managed for financial returns. The adjoining national forest lands are generally managed for multiple uses. The Forest Service ownership on the west side of the lake, which lies below the Grizzly Bear Recovery area, encompasses approximately 138,000 acres. Active management during the past 15 years has made much of this area roaded and accessible. The area is also experiencing increased recreational use from the nearby population centers. Since the area is also home to the grizzly bear, lynx, woodland caribou, and bull trout, the management combination of both the recreation users and the threatened or endangered species provides an excellent location to demonstrate a cooperative project.

Of all the wildlife species in the area, the grizzly bears have commanded the greatest attention. This species, listed as “threatened” in 1975, occupies many of the lands in the Priest Lake basin. While grizzly bears have persisted in the area, despite a long history of timber harvest and other disturbances, concern over the species has led to road closures and modifications to timber sales and other projects to better accommodate the needs of the bears and to reduce interactions with humans. The protection of these threatened or endangered species habitat is part of the complex ecosystem plan that involves the integration of restoration, water quality, and long-term sustainability of the area.

MAGNITUDE OF THE PROPOSAL

The Priest Lake Basin proposal involves managing the State of Idaho endowment lands on the east side of the lake, Forest Service national forest land ownership on the west side of the lake, and State of Idaho state park lands on Priest Lake and Priest River in a cooperative manner. The pilot project proposal is to be managed as a Cooperative for a 10- to 15-year period.

The State Board of Land Commissioners would serve as the board of trustees for the state endowment lands in this pilot project. The State Board of Parks and Recreation would serve as the board of trustees for the state park lands in this pilot project. The forest service would create a 5-7 person Board of Directors for the federal lands in the pilot project. The management agencies would include the Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Lands, and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Each agency would provide at least one staff person to support the Local Agency Managers to carry out the cooperative aspect of the management direction.

A Public Advisory Committee as the public voice identified in the “New Approaches for Managing Federally Administered Lands,” July 1998, will be comprised of representatives with demonstrated interest in the management of the Priest Lake Basin.

The membership of the Public Advisory Committee will include equitable representation from county commissioners, the environmental community, wildlife interest groups, forest industry, recreational interest groups, and local business interests. The Public Advisory Committee may assist in public involvement, preparation of the five-year and one-year plans, and may act as facilitator in resolving differing views on management plans and activities.

The three potential official parties to the cooperative agreement for Priest Lake—the Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Lands, and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation—will include the public as a fourth party to the cooperative agreement through the Public Advisory Committee. Periodically, representatives of the three oversight boards may meet to facilitate cooperative activities.

Each of the agencies would rely upon their existing staffs for timber, engineering, recreation, fish and wildlife, and planning expertise. The Department of Lands staff would operate on federal money or appropriated state general fund monies whenever staff was involved in activities that were not associated with endowment land management.

The three Boards of Trustees and Directors would work with the Public Advisory Committee and the Local Agency Managers to resolve issues and determine cooperative objectives, tasks, and actions. Receipts from treated areas, sale of timber, recreation fees, and other sources would support operations only on the lands which generated the revenue. Each agency would advance funds, as appropriate, for projects jointly agreed upon by the trustees and the Local Agency Managers.

The public, including residents of the area and recreational visitors, will receive benefits from cooperative management.

The public will find ease of use with a uniform set of fees and rules for all the recreational uses of the area. With the agencies working together, the recreational infrastructure of roads, trails, campsites, and other capital facilities should improve. The Local Agency Managers, together with public input from the Public Advisory Committee, can prioritize the needs and budgets in the project area.

The combination of the three organizations allows the experience and expertise of each entity to share data and management styles to implement the goals identified by the group as a whole.

COMMUNITY

The larger communities of Priest River and Sandpoint, as well as a half dozen smaller communities, are dependent on the timber activities in the area. Employment generated from timber activities, restoration, reforestation, and recreation are the main sources of revenues for the families and businesses of the area. The health of the forest is important to the recreational users and the local community, since most opportunities to work and play are found around and adjacent to Priest Lake. Recreation activities include boating, fishing, hunting, and camping, with many users coming from the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene areas.

ECONOMY

The residents of Spokane, Washington, and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, influence the economy around the Priest Lake Basin. Together, these communities have over 500,000 residents in the surrounding counties. Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry also are within reasonable distance of the Priest Lake Basin. These communities were established as timber communities and have a long history of living with the land. The National Forest makes a significant contribution to the economy of local communities through the income produced by direct and indirect employment.

While timber revenues have provided the majority of income from the area in the past, recreation cannot be overlooked. There are currently 261 developed campsites within the basin, including those at Indian Creek and Lionhead State Parks and those operated by the Forest Service. Sources of revenues include cabin site leases on federal lands, boating and snowmobile permits, timber harvesting, and recreation revenues. Cabin site leases on state land would not be considered as part of the recreational programs in the Cooperative.

ENVIRONMENT

The Priest Lake Basin has identified three main environmental areas that need attention:

- ? Management of key indicator species—the basin is home for the grizzly bear, lynx, woodland caribou, and bull trout.
- ? Restoration of historically abundant tree species—vegetative management activities are needed to restore tree species that were historically more abundant and direct management toward the larger basin-wide ecosystem.
- ? Improvement of fish habitat—water quality standards must be met and watershed restoration completed to improve fish habitat.

The Endangered Species Act may require modifications to the existing practices on both federal and state lands. The decision of the amount of room each species needs and the cost human society should bear to protect these species from extinction is difficult. The Idaho

Panhandle National Forest Plan identifies indicator species to help assess the impact of land management decisions on the wildlife resource. The ten indicator species are: bald eagle, grizzly bear, woodland caribou, gray wolf, elk, moose, white-tailed deer, goshawk, pine marten, pileated woodpecker, and the peregrine falcon. As an example, the grizzly bear is a species that will require monitoring and continual assessments to evaluate how the vegetation responds to different management practices. Vegetative responses will affect specific species differently and through continual monitoring can be managed to meet individual species needs.

Restoration of specific species of trees is important since many are not represented well in the ecosystem. White pine, whitebark pine, ponderosa pine, and larch have been greatly reduced. The loss of white pine and whitebark pine to blister rust has these populations at low levels. Wildfire suppression has also altered the vegetative composition and patterns across the forest, reducing the amount of some species and increasing others. Many areas are overstocked with Douglas-fir, grand fir, and hemlock that are very susceptible to insect and disease. As insect and disease or fire kills the trees, they fall over and create a tremendous fire hazard. This in turn increases the risk of a high intensity catastrophic fire that damages the soil, silts streams, and retards regeneration.

In some watersheds, sediment continues to be produced in some highly roaded areas, which affects water quality and fish habitat. Road decommissioning and obliteration is being conducted to reduce sediment and improve fish populations and habitat. Treatments directed in these areas to improve the habitat for key species and to enhance forest health will move management toward a larger ecosystem based approach. The management plans are to include vegetation management, and monitoring will begin to provide a basis for management prescriptions and the effects of management decisions on the habitat and the species involved.

PILOT PROJECT DETAILS

The Forest Service portion of the Priest Lake Basin is approximately 265,000 acres. The pilot project recommends management on the 138,000 acres which lie south of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. This allows greater flexibility to meet endangered species needs for the grizzly bear, lynx, woodland caribou, and bull trout, since these areas will not be scheduled for treatment unless activities will enhance and improve wildlife habitat.

The management of the Priest Lake Basin as a cooperative between the Idaho Department of Lands, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Forest Service provides the expertise and personnel to successfully implement cooperative projects. The specific requirements and activities necessary to provide good stewardship and services to the public at large can be directed to the organization best equipped to conduct the practices. The structure described has been documented in the "New Approaches for Managing Federally Administered Land," July 1998, and is discussed in this proposal.

The environmental analysis/documentation, appeals and litigation involving Forest Service lands can be conducted with Forest Service personnel. The Forest Service should use all pertinent data from universities, industry, and state research units, as well as their own, to develop the environmental analysis and the five-year and one-year plans.

The Idaho Department of Lands shall manage the endowment lands in accordance with the constitutional charge and direction from the Land Board. Additionally, the department, through general-funded, in-house personnel or contracting, could provide support in treating the areas on federal lands. The recreational activities should be directed to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to streamline and standardize the services to the recreational users in the area.

When creating the pilot project time period, the environmental analysis and the five-year management planning process that may require two or three years must be taken into consideration. To allow sufficient activities to occur for monitoring and evaluation, the pilot project recommended time period is 15 years.

There are economies of scale in cooperative management of state and federal lands surrounding Priest Lake. Forests with a larger contiguous base have lower management cost than forests with smaller holdings. The fixed cost can be spread out over a larger area, taking advantage of the economies of scale. To keep unit costs under control, combining management units is advantageous. Cooperatively managing areas will provide the opportunity for monitoring and evaluation of the entire basin. The cooperative can reduce cost, address wildlife habitat, and provide good forest stewardship practices with a multi-agency approach.

The cooperative method would provide the opportunity for each agency to focus their expertise on the management and responsibilities that best fit their organization. An example might be to have the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation manage the State Parks and camping areas on both sides of the lake, standardizing fees and services for all users.

The cooperative method would provide budgetary benefits to each of the agencies. Presently, revenues from federal timber sales are returned to the federal treasury, less the portion that is kept by the Forest Service for brush disposal, reforestation, and the 25 percent of the gross revenue from the sales returned to the local counties. These revenues can be used for operations and habitat improvements.

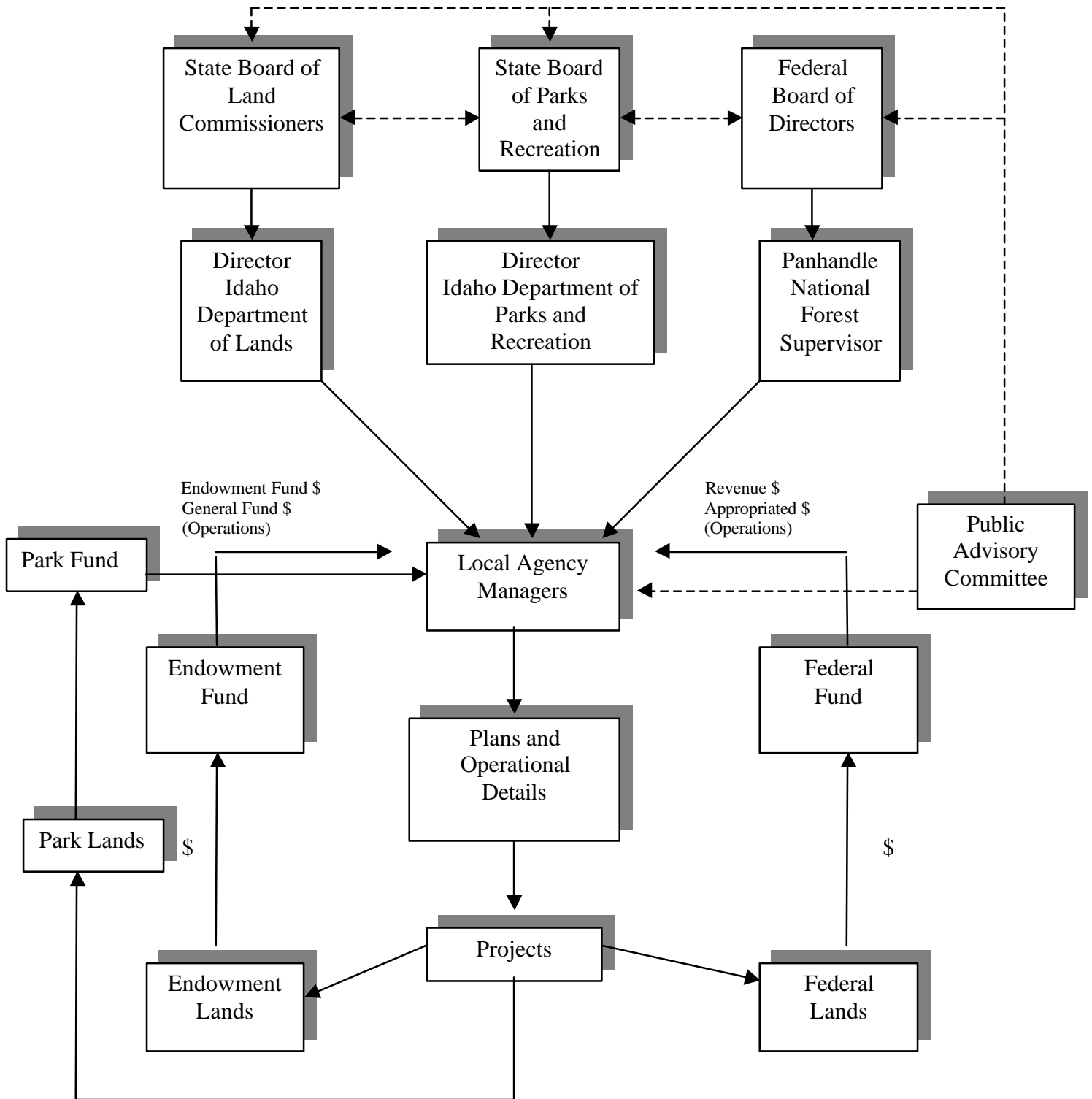
Congress funds other functions of the Forest Service through annual appropriations, however with declining timber sale activity and generally reduced appropriations, the Forest Service is experiencing major budget problems. These reductions are manifested in reduced maintenance of campgrounds and recreational facilities, less road maintenance and wildlife habitat programs, and other limitations that are costly to users of the forest. Stabilizing budgets and increasing revenues will support not only local communities but also allow for more watershed restoration and ecosystem management that works toward long-term forest sustainability.

COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Properly constructed, the pilot project will provide an opportunity for a parcel of mixed federal-state ownership to be managed in a cooperative manner. Development of the cooperative pilot project will require legislation both on the part of Congress and the Idaho Legislature. Such

action would designate the pilot project area, the purpose, and the method of achieving the goals. This action would be followed by development and execution of a Memorandum of Understanding between the state and the federal government clearly describing the obligations of each party in the operation of the project. This action would be undertaken under the joint powers' authority of the state and federal government.

Priest Lake Basin Cooperative



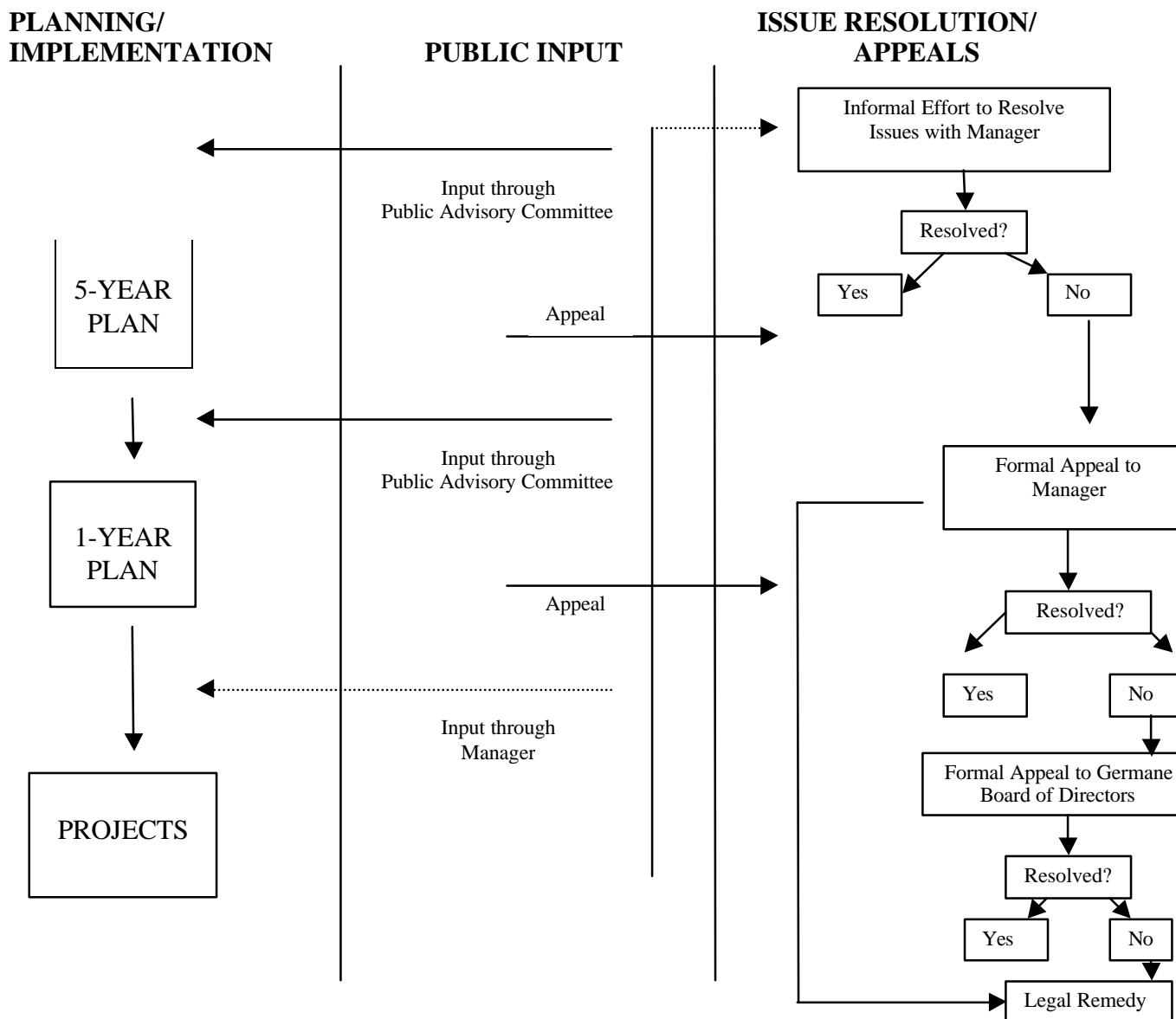
MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The proposed management system of the Priest Lake Basin Cooperative is diagrammed in the previous chart.

Upon execution of the Memorandum of Understanding between the federal and state governments, the management of the pilot project will be the responsibility of the respective state and federal managers. Neither relinquishes control over land under their individual authority, but the management is done on a cooperative basis guided by the memorandum and mutually developed plans to implement the intent of the agreement.

As with the other alternatives, the Priest Lake Basin Cooperative operations will be directed by five- and one-year plans. A Public Advisory Committee would provide public input during the planning process. The appropriate Board of Trustees or Directors would adjudicate administrative appeals. Formal administrative appeals would be allowed during the five- and one-year planning processes but would not be allowed on individual projects.

Cooperative Planning and Public Input Process



FISCAL PROCESSES

The fiscal support for the Priest Lake Basin Cooperative would come from both the federal treasury and the general fund of the State of Idaho. The extent of funding from each source would be clearly defined in the Memorandum of Understanding supporting the pilot project.

Since the objective of the Priest Lake Basin Cooperative will be set in the future by the Cooperative Boards of Directors, funding from both the state and federal government is expected to continue throughout the pilot project period. Non-endowment land revenue produced from the

pilot project activities will offset the operational costs of the project as well as public goods expenses. We also recommend funding a contingency account to provide for unexpected future events and downturns in revenue and funding.

Any revenue remaining after operations, funds for counties, and contingency funds would be distributed to the state and federal agencies on a proportional basis for disposal according to their respective guidelines.

The cooperative pilot project will require more complex accounting than the other alternatives due to the need to maintain separate accounts for state and federal funding support and revenues.

The Priest Lake Basin cooperative will use the same planning process as used in the trust and collaborative alternatives, retaining the same opportunities for public involvement and administrative appeals. The Public Advisory Committee will ensure the interests of the local citizens are fully considered in the decision-making process. The committee will encourage close communication and cooperation between federal and state land management agencies. Since successful models of state and federal cooperative agreements are already in operation, this type of pilot project should be readily implemented on the ground.

The Memorandum of Understanding would establish the cooperative duties of each agency/department and would delineate the funding and distribution of revenues. The memorandum, supported by state and federal legislation, would provide formalized plans and stabilized budgets. Managers and local communities would benefit from clear objectives to guide decision-making. Fish and wildlife habitat and water quality would be maintained and enhanced through affirmative decisions, on-the-ground accomplishments, and a stable flow of funds to improve ecosystems and protect resources.

REVENUE AND EXPENSE SUMMARIES

Existing Proforma Panhandle National Forest, Priest Lake Ranger District

Revenues generated from land management operations 1996-1999 Average Treatment Acres and Values		
Timberland 707 treated acres	\$846,800	
Recreation Fees	\$250,000	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees	5,100	
TOTAL	\$1,101,900	\$1,101,900

Expense for Operations 1999 Priest Lake Ranger District		
Timberlands		
Fire	\$408,911	
Planning	\$7,300	
Timber Sales	\$35,531	
Reforestation	\$626,540	
Recreation	\$232,237	
Minerals	\$19,446	
Grazing	\$7,132	
Heritage Resources	---	
Wildlife	\$11,358	
*Noxious Weed Control	\$11,000	
Roads and Maintenance	\$139,667	
Soil & Water	\$92,244	
Administration/Misc	\$991,009	
TOTAL	\$2,582,375	(\$2,582,375)
Total revenues available less expense for operations		(\$1,480,475)

Watershed restoration on the Panhandle National Forest consists of road obliteration, road decommissioning, reconstruction, soil stabilization, and drainage-improvement projects. These costs are included under the soil and water budget. Recreation fees and income are generated through special use fees, cabin, and campground use. *Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) 1998 summary of noxious weeds identified 248,800 acres. This makes the IPNF one of the top three National Forests in the region requiring large-scale weed control efforts.

Potential Pilot Proforma

Priest Lake Ranger District		
Revenues generated from land management operations		
PILOT Proforma		
Timberland 2073 treatment acres*	\$2,482,000	
Recreation Fees	\$250,000	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees 82,000 AUM Total	\$5,100	
TOTAL	\$2,737,100	\$2,737,100

Expense for Operations 1999 Priest Lake Ranger District		
Timberlands		
Fire	\$408,911	
Planning	\$7,300	
Timber Sales	\$35,531	
Reforestation	\$626,540	
Recreation	\$232,237	
Minerals	\$19,446	
Grazing	\$7,132	
Heritage Resources	---	
Wildlife	\$11,358	
Noxious Weed Control**	\$22,000	
Roads and Maintenance	\$139,667	
Soil & Water	\$92,244	
Resource Monitoring	\$50,100	
Administration/Misc	\$951,909	
TOTAL	\$2,604,375	(\$2,604,375)
Total revenues available less expense for operations		\$132,725

*Potential treatment acres from the Priest Lake District are similar to state lands and are projected by the Forest Service.

**Noxious weeds control efforts are doubled in the Potential Proforma to address this increasing problem that threatens native plants and habitats.

COMPARISON OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ECONOMIC EFFICIENCIES

The strategy of coordinating the Idaho Department of Lands and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation together with the Forest Service may allow for some consolidation and streamlining. Combining and directing management activities to the personnel and departments that can best handle the specific needs will increase resource input and reduce the cost of management. The social and ecological improvements are discussed in the Management Strategies and the economic considerations are identified in Economic Efficiencies.

Management Strategies

Good forest management or forest stewardship is the ability to apply appropriate practices that retain the health of the forest. Stewardship is responsive to social, economic, ecologic, and cultural conditions that exist for the forest ecosystem.

In response to declining forest health, there has been a move toward large-scale ecological restoration and management. The focus in ecosystem restoration is to use silvicultural treatments to roughly emulate historic disturbances such as fire and forest insect infestations.

This management strategy, combined with good forest stewardship, can be conducted in a manner that protects the environment, enhances visual qualities for recreational users, and produces commodities for the local businesses and communities.

The Priest Lake Ranger District on the west side of Priest Lake encompasses approximately 265,000 acres. The potential treatment acres of 2073 is a conservative amount, which will be monitored and evaluated to determine if this level of activity meets the restoration needs in the project area. If restoration needs indicate increased activities are necessary, the Directors will direct the cooperative to move quickly to achieve the desired future condition.

Economic Efficiencies

The Priest Lake Ranger District recently planned in 1998-2002 to treat 2100 acres. In the past management activities from the Priest Lake District treated approximately 2000 acres annually. In recent years, administrative decisions and legal challenges have reduced the number of acres treated to approximately 700 acres (1992-1999). The Forest Service has identified that 2100 acres can be treated annually. This management level can address the environmental issues and protect the scenic beauty of the lake region. These recommendations are reasonable when the landscape size, tree growth, and location of the pilot project are taken into consideration.

The existing Revenue and Expense Summary identifies \$1,101,900 in revenues generated on the pilot area, with an annual budget expenditure of \$2,582,375. This is a cost of \$1,480,475 over revenues. The potential proforma identifies that the pilot project will treat 2073 acres, which is the projected goal. The Forest Service has not been able to meet this target due to dwindling budgets and continual appeals and objections by interest groups. The potential proforma, if implemented as outlined by the Forest Service, would generate \$2,737,100 in revenues, producing a positive income of \$132,725 over and above the cost of management.

This revenue can be used for operations or ecological needs throughout the pilot area. If the Directors see restoration needs increasing beyond the level of past activities, more acres can be treated to improve the forest health by moving toward the desired future condition and providing a healthier ecosystem.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Present management activities are far below the level of implementation to address the ecological needs of the forest. Through pre-commercial and commercial thinning, use of prescribed fire, and stream and road restoration, landscape wide improvements can be made to maintain a healthy green forest, increase wildlife habitat, reduce wildfire losses and protect our water resources.

Our National Forest needs to treat more acres and direct management towards long-term ecosystem sustainability. It is undeniable that many natural resource advocates have come to rely on the federal process to ensure judicial scrutiny over federal agency decision-making to slow or stop resource extraction. The tremendous efforts of time, funds, and resources that go into the judicial review of federal decision-making can be more beneficial to our natural resources if these energies were re-directed in a cooperative decision making process that would serve our environment and public assets on a national and local level.

The Priest Lake Basin Cooperative will ensure the opportunities for public involvement in the decision-making process. The Public Advisory Committee will encourage close communications and cooperation between the federal and state land management agencies. The Memorandum of Understanding would establish the cooperative duties of each agency and would delineate the funding and distribution of revenues. The Memorandum would also provide for formalized plans and stabilize budgets. Managers and local communities would benefit from clear objectives that guide the decisions.

The cooperation of several agencies allows for new ideas and fosters the change necessary to meet the challenges of managing our public resources. The Priest Lake Basin area is the home of several threatened or endangered species and has experienced a large increase in recreational use and interest from several larger communities in the area. The cooperative can demonstrate, and evaluate through monitoring, the effectiveness of managing under this method. Through effective monitoring, the pilot project accomplishments can be compared to adjacent areas. The ecological conditions can be assessed and evaluated as to how the practices contribute to long-term sustainability of the Priest Lake Basin ecosystem.

This project was originally submitted by Riley Creek Lumber, Crown Pacific Corporation-LLP, Louisiana Pacific Corporation and Idaho Forest Industries. Additionally, this project was further developed and modified with the participation and assistance of Northwest Management, Inc. and the Federal Lands Task Force Working Group.